

Charter of the Mid-Atlantic Network Board of Directors

April 8, 2003

Introduction

This charter supports the goals of the National Park Service Natural Resource Challenge to inventory and monitor ecosystem health on parklands. The purpose of this document is to describe the basic practices to be used to plan, organize, manage, evaluate and modify the Mid-Atlantic Network “Vital Signs” Monitoring Program. The Mid-Atlantic Network includes 10 parks:

- Appomattox Court House National Historical Park (APCO)
- Booker T. Washington National Monument (BOWA)
- Gettysburg National Military Park (GETT)
- Eisenhower National Historic Site (EISE)
- Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park (FRSP)
- Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site (HOFU)
- Petersburg National Battlefield Park (PETE)
- Richmond National Battlefield Park (RICH)
- Shenandoah National Park (SHEN)
- Valley Forge National Historical Park (VAFO)

The Mid-Atlantic Network Board of Directors is comprised of 9 park superintendents or their representatives, the Northeast Region I & M Coordinator, the Mid-Atlantic Network Coordinator, and a Northeast Region Chief Scientist. The Board of Directors will pursue a holistic approach in defining Network management issues and resources of concern, identifying the best place to monitor these resources using scientifically credible standards.

Responsibilities of the Board of Directors

The major responsibilities of the Board of Directors are:

- Require accountability and effectiveness for the I&M Program by reviewing progress, quality control, and spending of Network funds.
- Provide guidance to the Network Coordinator, Network Data Manager, Technical Steering Committee (See subgroups section) and natural resource staffs of the Network’s parks in the purpose, design and implementation of vital signs monitoring and other management activities related to the Natural Resource Challenge.

- Decide on strategies and procedures for leveraging Network funds and personnel to best accomplish inventory and monitoring and other natural resource needs of Network parks.
- Seek additional financial support to leverage the Servicewide funds.
- Solicit professional guidance from and partnerships with other governmental agencies, organizations and individuals.
- Serve as advocates for the Natural Resource Challenge and promote understanding of the importance of the Inventory and Monitoring program among park staff, visitors and decision makers.

Procedures of the Board of Directors

Board Meetings: Any member can call a meeting of the Board, but there will be at least one formal meeting annually. If travel logistics are difficult to arrange then Board meetings may be held by telephone, video, or Internet conference. All members will be notified of all meetings. Formal meetings will require a written agenda distributed at least one week before. When important decisions need to be made, details must be included with the agenda so board members can decide whether to attend or send an alternate. Telephone conference meetings, to deal with a small number of topics, may be called by any member. Simple matters can be resolved via electronic mail.

Alternates and Quorums: Board meetings are open to Technical Steering Committee members and other invitees. Any Board member who cannot participate in a meeting of the Board may assign an alternate. A park superintendent from the Network may not serve as the alternate, or carry the proxy of another park superintendent. If the above mentioned procedures for calling a board meeting are followed then all board members and designated alternates that attend will constitute a quorum; members who do not attend forfeit their right to vote and must accept the Board's decisions.

Decision-Making: All decisions are made by majority. All decisions will be documented with deadlines and responsible individuals identified. The Board of Directors will designate one Superintendent to sign documents for the Board once a decision is reached.

Monitoring Plan: A monitoring plan covering the purpose, scope, objectives and goals of the Mid-Atlantic Network's Inventory and Monitoring program will be developed by the Network Coordinator, other Network staff, Cooperators and the Technical Steering Committee. The monitoring plan will identify what will be monitored, where, when and how it will be monitored and how data will be managed, and will describe the relationship with other NPS programs and the I&M efforts of other land and resource managers. The Board of Directors will approve this plan.

Annual Administrative Report and Work Plan: Working with appropriate subgroups and others, the Network Coordinator will prepare the Annual Administrative Report and Work Plan (AARWP) by November 1st each year. The report and work plan will identify proposed and actual accomplishments and products, lessons learned, presentations and publications, responsible individuals and cooperators, funding sources

(NPS and others) and a detailed accounting of the use of all I&M program funds (inventory, monitoring, water, vegetation mapping). Costs for conduct of meetings by the Board and the Technical Steering Committee will be summarized in the AARWP.

The Board or their designee will approve the final Annual Administrative Report and Work Plan no later than January 15 of each year. The AARWP will be widely distributed and posted on appropriate websites.

Funding: Available I&M program funds will be distributed to Network projects, parks and offices as directed through the Annual Work Plan. An organizational code has been established for the Network (2108) and all I&M program funds must be strictly accounted for using a discrete PWE code and disclosed in the Annual Report. Using these funds for purposes other than in support of the Network's strategic and monitoring plans constitutes cause for funds reassignment within the Network. Additionally, funds contributed to the Network program by parks, other NPS programs and other sources will be carefully tracked and reported on.

Staffing: Staff hired by the Network will be directed and administratively supported by the Network I&M Coordinator in conjunction with the park or office at which they are stationed. The Network will provide administrative support for travel and training. The Network I&M Coordinator will be directly supervised by the Regional I&M Coordinator.

Technical Steering Committee and other groups

Technical Steering Committee: A standing Mid-Atlantic Network Technical Steering Committee will provide technical assistance and advice to the Board in developing a long-term monitoring strategy. The Technical Steering Committee will be responsible for:

- Compiling and summarizing existing information about park resources.
- Developing materials for and summarizing the findings and recommendations of any scoping workshops held to develop a Network monitoring strategy.
- Participating in the identification of monitoring objectives and development of the Network Strategic Plan.
- Assisting in the selection of vital signs.
- Coordinating peer review required by the program.
- Evaluating initial sampling designs, methods and protocols.
- Reviewing annual data reports and interpretation as well as participating in the review of the Annual Administrative Report and Work Plan.
- Developing materials for and facilitating preparation of the Monitoring Plan and any program reviews.

Technical Steering Committee Procedures: The Technical Steering Committee will meet on an as needed basis and at least once annually. This committee is lead by the Network Coordinator and composition will be recommended by park resource management staffs and approved by the Board of Directors. The Network Coordinator will present products

and recommendations of the Technical Steering Committee to the Board by for discussion and approval or modification.

Other Workgroups: When needed, the Board of Directors, Technical Steering Committee, Network I&M Coordinator and/or the Regional I&M Coordinator may form groups of specialists to work on a particular task or a particular sub-program area. No such group will be formed without inclusion of a specific “sunset” provision.

Coordination

To be most effective, the Board will maintain a close working relationship with the natural resources staff of each park in the Network, members of the Technical Steering Committee, the Network I&M Coordinator and the Regional I&M Coordinator. Board members are encouraged to participate in and/or keep informed with respect to the work of the Technical Steering Committee. The Network I&M Coordinator will be expected to provide regular briefings (by memoranda, electronic mail or telephone conference) to the Board.

Reporting

The Network Coordinator will circulate minutes from Board of Directors and Technical Steering Committee meetings and copies of the Annual Administrative Report and Work Plan to all members of the Board and Technical Steering Committee. Reports and deliverables from inventories, monitoring design studies, etc will be peer reviewed and included in the Region's technical publication series. The Network I&M Coordinator will maintain an administrative record of meetings, decisions, reports and peer review and other documents to insure program and fiscal accountability.

Amendments

The Board may amend this Charter at any time. The Network I&M Coordinator will provide a 30-day advanced notice to all Board members of any proposed amendments before they are voted on. Amendments will be made by majority.

Approval Signatures for the Board of Directors

H. Reed Johnson, Superintendent
Appomattox Court House National Historical Park

date

Rebecca L. Harriett, Superintendent
Booker T. Washington National Monument

date

John A. Latschar, Superintendent
Gettysburg National Military Park
Eisenhower National Historic Site

date

John Hennessy, Acting Superintendent
Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park

date

William A. Sanders, Superintendent
Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site

date

James R. Kirby, Superintendent
Petersburg National Battlefield Park

date

Cynthia MacLeod, Superintendent
Richmond National Battlefield Park

date

Douglas K. Morris, Superintendent
Shenandoah National Park

date

Arthur L. Stewart, Superintendent
Valley Forge National Historical Park

date

John Karish, Chief Scientist

date

Elizabeth Johnson, NER I&M Coordinator

date